Technical Review Form Page 1 of 21



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0233AR-1 for Rogers Public School District #30

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant presents a clear and compelling vision for reform that was developed with input from all community stakeholders. The reform efforts are currently underway and include specific efforts designed to meet the needs of subgroups (ELL students; students with disabilities). In addition, the applicant includes all of the necessary components of effective reform - professional development; curriculum alignment; access to post-secondary and career planning opportunities; access to advanced courses; alignment between elementary, secondary and postsecondary expectations, etc.
- This section of the application also references the district strategic plan developed and in the process of being implemented. The strategic plan is very detailed and includes goals, activities, person responsible, measurement criteria and timeline. This is also a strength of the proposal . . . the strategic plan is clear evidence that this LEA has been in the process of reform for several years and has developed a very comprehensive plan to ensure the reform efforts are successful.
- · This section warrants a high rating.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- This applicant provides a list of participating schools as well as the number of participating students.
- The applicant plans to include all schools in the LEA and, as a result, does not outline a process to select schools.
- The applicant does not provide much detail regarding high need students or participating educators.
- This section meets the basic requirements for selection criteria A2, however, due to the lack of a description of an approach to implementing its reform proposal, and a lack of detail beyond the number of students from low income families, this section warrants a medium rating.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
---	----	---

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides provides evidence that schools within the district have been improving as a result of the district's efforts.
- The proposal also makes the point that grant funds will allow the district to increase its efforts, affecting more students and more teachers.
- This section of the proposal does not provide a detailed plan for how the proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform, however, the district's strategic plan provide a significant level of detail regarding reform efforts.

Technical Review Form Page 2 of 21

• This proposal warrants a high rating for this selection criteria.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) 10 9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides very clear and specific goals in all areas as well as baseline data.
- This section is strong due to the inclusion of specific assessment data, goals for each year of the proposal and postgrant goals for student achievement at all grade levels and in all subpopulations. Proposed goals would allow the district to further close achievement gaps.
- The goals associated with graduation rates seem small compared to goals for growth in other areas.
- This section warrants a high rating due to the narrative describing efforts that have already been in place, baseline data, goals for each project year and post-grant goals.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides clear evidence that students have made significant gains (by grade level, school and subgroup) in all content areas. Documentation of these gains is provided in the appendices of the proposal.
- Increases in graduation and college-going rates have not been consistent.
- The applicant provides information regarding the ways that student data is made available to students, educators and parents. It is not as clear how data is used to improve participation or services. Based on evidence provided in other sections of the proposal, it is clear that educators use data to improve instruction.
- The applicant clearly addresses the required elements in this particular selection criteria. This sections warrants a high rating.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
(2)(2)		

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This item is not addressed in the proposal - as a result, the applicant does not receive points for this section.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant addresses all elements of this section. Descriptions indicate that the State has adopted rigorous standards and college/career ready graduation requirements. In addition, the State has a longitudinal data system and ESEA-related accountability system in place that will allow the LEA to continue to evaluate its performance and improve.
- A reference to a decision regarding legal autonomy indicates that the LEA will have the autonomy necessary to implement this proposal.
- It does include evidence of support from local and State officials.
- The applicant met the requirements of this section. As a result, the section warrants a high score.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Technical Review Form Page 3 of 21

- The applicant does not address whether the LEA has a collective bargaining unit.
- The narrative in this section includes statements that suggest a variety of stakeholder groups were involved in commenting and/or providing input into the development of the proposal.
- Evidence of teacher comments and support from local and State officials is provided in the appendices.
- The weakness in this area is the lack of evidence of meeting the requirements of either support from the collective bargaining unit or 70% of teachers from participating schools as well as support from a variety of stakeholder groups (such as the groups outlined in the selection criteria). It is unclear whether representatives from some of the represented subgroups participated and provided input.
- Due to the lack of response to the specific requirements of this section, this section warrants a low score.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
--	---	---

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides a desciption of components of the proposed plan. There are references to the reasons that the applicant included each specific component, however, there is not a description of a plan to analyze the applicant's current status, or a desciption of the specific logic behind the reform proposal.
- This section included important information regarding the proposed plan but it did not provide information about the analysis of needs and gaps. As a result, this section warrants a low score.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant presents goals and a rationale for each goal. In most cases, goals seem reasonable and would likely
 lead to increased achievement for some, or most, students. The applicant also addresses goals associated with
 increased college and career awareness as well as specific academic achievement goals for students at a variety of
 grade levels. In addition, goals associated with technology devices would allow more individualized instruction.
 While these goals are commendable, this section requires inclusion of a high quality plan (including mechanisms,
 strategies, accomodations, etc.)
- The variety of types of goals shows that the proposed project uses a well-rounded approach that may be more likely to impact a significant number of students. Again, the goals seem to indicate a desire to implement a plan but the plan is not included.
- The applicant includes a physical education goal and it is unclear how this is an element that should be included in a RTTD grant proposal it may be appropriate, however, no rationale for why this would improve student achievement, eliminate achievement gaps or improve instruction is provided.
- The biggest weakness of this section is that it merely provides goals and information about why the applicant thinks each goal is important. This section requires applicants to describe a plan, mechanisms, strategies, accomodations, etc. and there is little, or no, information that specifically addresses C1 (a), (b), or (c). As a result, this section warrants a low score.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

• The applicant provides a complete description of current professional development and collaboration efforts and goals associated with this proposal. This description generally meets the requirements of C2(a), however, descriptions are not comprehensive and/or detailed.

Technical Review Form Page 4 of 21

• Each goal is followed by strategies and a rationale - this is a strength, in this section, in that it specifically includes information that indicates the applicant has a plan for professional development that includes the "how" and not merely the "what".

- Strategies are designed to include all teachers and principals in the LEA and are focused on effective teaching and leadership strategies. The applicant also includes information regarding the positive impact of similar training on a portion of district staff members. This provides evidence of both an indication that there is a history of collaboration and professional development activities, and a plan to include all educators in the district. This provides some information about the applicant's plans, however, it does not describe the way that educators will be trained to access and use data to inform their decisions.
- Goals and strategies in this section tend to be fairly general they address the selection criteria in a general way but do not address specific items under C2. In addition, there is no clear tie to C1 and no description of a continuous evaluation or improvement process.
- This section warrants a medium score due to the lack of detail provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- This section is one of the strongest sections in the proposal.
- The applicant provides a description of some general district policies as well as leadership and district structure that would support the proposed plan.
- The applicant a description of district leadership teams; school building teams; teams associated with serving specific subpopulations or addressing specific topics, and interactions with parents and other stakeholders. The process described includes a balance of district collaboration and direction with building autonomy.
- Based upon the description provided, the applicant indicates that the district has a high level of collaboration around program evaluation and student data analysis.
- Information regarding giving students the opportunity to progress and giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery is not included in the proposal. In addition, there is not a lot of information provided about how the district addresses learning resources and instructional strategies for students with disabilities or ELLs.
- This section is a strong part of the proposal and warrants a high rating.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) 10 7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant addresses all of the requirements of this section. It is clear that stakeholders have access to a variety of data systems that support involvement, analysis and involvement of parents, educators and students.
- One of the strengths of this section is the multiple ways that the LEA addresses kindergarten readiness. It is clear that parents/guardians are provided with many different ways to help ensure their children are ready for kindergarten. In addition, parents may participate in multiple events that support reading and math for their children. The approaches described allow all parents access, even those of specifc subpopulations or those parents that have native languages other than English.
- The weakness of this section is that the description of how the infrastructure supports personalized learning is rather general.
- · This section warrants a medium rating.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

Technical Review Form Page 5 of 21

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- •The applicant notes that if the LEA receives the grant, the district's strategic plan will be expanded in order to incorporate RTTD elements. Due to the comprehensive nature of the district's strategic plan, and accountability, tied to specific individuals, for monitoring and continuous improvement, the applicant sufficiently addresses a mechanism for evaluation and adjustment.
- •The applicant proposes hiring a RTTD director. The director will report monthly and a plan to collaborate and share information is briefly described.
- •The description of what data will be collected and evaluated, and how collaboration or dissemination to the public will occur is rather brief. This is a significant weakness in the section.
- •The strength of this section is its tie to a strategic plan and continuous improvement model that is clearly in place in the district. The weakness is the lack of identification of what data will be collected and how it will be disseminated and/or be used for continuous improvement. As a result, this section warrants a medium score.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5	
(-/(-/ - постоя с типи с постоя с посто		_	

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- This section clearly identifies current, past and future efforts to communicate with all community stakeholders. The communication plan in the appendices is comprehensive and includes a reasonable timeline.
- The applicant did an excellent job of descibing communication strategies and opportunities for stakeholder engagement this section was very thorough and warrants a high score.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
--	---	---

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The performance measures outlined in this section are thorough and include baseline data as well as measures for each grant year and post-grant. This is a strength.
- There are several typos in the first few performance measures this looks like a copy and paste issue and should have been reviewed prior to submission.
- Goals for 9-12 graders are good goals, but proposed goals for growth in student attainment of these goals and narrowing of the achievement gaps seem relatively small and fail to adequately address the fairly large existing gaps in these data.
- This section warrants a fairly high score for thoroughness and comprehensive approach.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) 5 2	(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
---	---	---	---

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

• The description provided is very general and does not address specific items such as employment of technology; compensation reform; modification of school structure or schedule; decision-making structures, etc. As a result, this section warrants a medium rating.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score	
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5	

Technical Review Form Page 6 of 21

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

• The budget tables are extremely thorough and provide detailed cost information for each proposed project. This is a strength of the applicants proposal.

- Line items within each budget seem reasonable.
- The applicant does not seem to address sustainability other than increased funding due to district growth.
- The applicant has addressed some items in a very detailed manner and others are missing. As a result, this section warrants a medium score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

1

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not adequately address sustainability in this section. Some general information about seeking grants and private donors is included. In addition, a table with a 3 year post grant budget is included, however, there is not a clear desciption of how the funds in the post-grant budget will be acquired or whether the savings is realistic.

Due to the lack of clear descriptions and evidence of sustainability, this section warrants a low rating.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- While there are several partnerships described within this section, evidence of impact on district students seems to be relatively small and anecdotal.
- Desired results are not described in the table, the column marked "desired results" describes proposed activities in many cases.
- The proposed activities and/or results do not seem like they are tied to the RTTD proposal in some cases, they seem like an extension of current district programs.
- The impact on under-served populations seems somewhat minimal given the size of the district.
- As a result of these factors, the section warrants a low score.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of both a vision and a plan to improve learning in the district. The plan is aligned to the core educational assurance areas and is focused on meeting the academic needs of students, ultimately preparing students for college and careers. The proposal tends to address each item very briefly and the plan lacks cohesiveness. The applicant met the basic requirements of Absolute Priority 1, however, the proposal includes significant weaknesses.

Total	210	120
-------	-----	-----

Technical Review Form Page 7 of 21



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0233AR-2 for Rogers Public School District #30

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The vision of district-wide reform was not comprehensive and clear approaches for improving student achievement were not presented.

The district's strategic plan addresses some aspects of the assurance areas, but the strategic plan overall is not strongly aligned to the assurance areas or personalized learning.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A rationale was provided for the inclusion of all district schools in proposed grant activities. Names of schools were provided, as was the number of participating students from low income families. Required data regarding participating students, schools, and educators were provided in Table A (2).

The inclusion of all district schools and students would support effective LEA implementation, since it would create a systemic focus that would facilitate project implementation and the vertical alignment of the program.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

10

2

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan describing how the proposed program would support meaningful district-wide change (including key goals, activities/rationale, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible) was not presented.

Information presented in the application (the intended impacts of the RTTT proposal, 3 district initatives currently underway, seeking resources for students through partnerships, and awards and recognitions received) was not relevant to the selection criteria.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Targets were provided in all required areas for students in the aggreate and for subgroups. Targets were also included for postsecondary degree attainment. Targets seem ambitious, yet achievable, although there is no indication in the discussion as to whether identified targets meet or exceed state standards.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

A	Available	Score
---	-----------	-------

Technical Review Form Page 8 of 21

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Rogers School District demonstrated a strong track record of improving student learning and closing achievement gaps:

• Evidence was provided that indicated that significant progress has been made toward closing achievement gaps between white students and Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, and limited English proficient students in both literacy and mathematics.

With respect to college enrollment and graduation rate, district results were mixed:

- The district experienced an increase in the percent of college enrollment (20 percentage points in 4 years), but not in the graduation rate.
- According to the 3-year trend data, the graduation rate increased to 89.2% in 2009-10, then fell to the 2008-09 level in 2012-11 (85.4%).

No evidence of success in turning around low performing schools is presented, and strategies included for addressing low performing schools in the district actually reference universal strategies and programs that are used in all schools.

Methods of sharing data with district personnel, school personnel, and parents were discussed. However, no information was presented regarding the sharing of data with students and parents to inform and improve instruction and services.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
This section was not included in the application.		
(D)(2) State contact for implementation (40 naints)	40	40
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Rogers School District has sufficient automomy to under Arkansas Department of Education regulations to implement the proposed program. No state-level barriers exist to linking achievement data to teacher and principal evaluation.

Successful conditions were decribed that would provide a backdrop of strong support for project implementation, such as state evaluation of Rogers' improvement plan, required remediation for students not scoring proficient on state assessments, and rigorous state graduation requirements.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
---	----	---

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is some evidence of internal and external stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal, (principals discussed proposed ideas with staff; and presentations made in business and civic meetings), but not enough to reflect adequate stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal. Changes in the grant proposal were described, but there is not indication as to who made the recommendations to modify the proposal. Although the statement was made that over 70% of teachers in participating schools supported the proposal, no evidence was presented to support this statement.

Letters from several organizations are included in the appendix, indicating strong community support of the proposal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) 5 3	
--	--

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The statement of the rationale and logic for the project was vague and limited in scope. Eleven components of a plan to address needs and gaps were discussed. The components of a high quality plan were not consistently

Technical Review Form Page 9 of 21

presented. Objectives were included for some components, activities were included for some, and, in a few instances, rationales for the activites presented were discussed.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A plan, including 6 goals, with activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible, was included in the appendix.

Although the goals and activities address the implementation of personalized learning environments and a focus on college and career readiness, they do not address the scoring criteria in a meaningful way, by discussing student exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives, accommodations for high need students, student mastery of the academic skills of teamwork, prolem-solving, perserverance, and creativity, or the ongoing use of student feedback.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	12
---	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A plan, including 4 goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible, is included in the appendix.

Teachers would receive numerous, robust training opportunities and resourcs that would provide them with the supports necessary to structure personalized learning environments:

- Training to adapt content and instruction to personalize instruction to allow students to engage in creative tasks;
- Training in use of technology to personalize learning;
- Customized training to support remediation and enrichment.
- Implementation of Danielson Framework which requires evidence of student growth from artifacts and external assessments;
- District dashboard that informs teachers of results so that adjustments can be made, and that archives student information over time;
- Timely electronic reports to teachers to increase learning tools to improve instruction;
- Additional instructional technology in classrooms (i.e., smart boards, I-devices, presentation technology)

Leaders would receive insufficient training, tools, policies, data, and resources to lead the shift to personalized learning environments. The use of multiple sources of data in determining student progress and a revised teacher evaluation system were the only supports discussed.

The plan does not address strategies or actions to address increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective teachers in hard to staff subjects and specialty areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Central office organization and policies and practices would provide a high level of support and accountility for grant objectives and activities, as evidenced by the following:

Organizational structure and lines of authority that adress major functions of public educational organizations;

Technical Review Form Page 10 of 21

- Weekly executive leadership team meetings;
- Established monthly meeting dates for building staff and district specialty groups (i.e., special education teachers, ESOL teachers, etc); and
- School leadership teams with autonomy over operational issues.

District practices and policies would provide students with non-traditional methods of demonstrating mastery and cuttingedge tools to personalize their learning, such as "I-devices" and web-based software.

Selection criteria (e) was not addressed.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

4

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Rogers School District provides inadequate support to parents and students with respect to content, tools, and learning resources.

Limited evidence of parent and student access to content and learning resources was provided: parent resource
centers with digital and written materials for parents, and summer reading books for students and instruction sheets
for parents.

Technical support to student, parents, and teachers is not sufficient.

The only evidence of technical support for educators presented was through access to model lessons which are
posted on the district website and through local grants available from civic organizations. No evidence of districtsupported technical assistance for students or parents was presented.

No evidence of exporting information in open data format was provided.

The district uses interoperable data systems for a variety of data; and teachers are able to easily access data that are relevant to their work through *FileMaker Pro*.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district's strategic plan would be expanded to include the performance measures included in the proposal. A process was identified for continuous improvement that would include frequent reporting at various levels of the organization with mechanisms for determining the need for modifications. However, there was no identification of the leading indicators that would be periodically assessed and monitored.

The only method of sharing information regarding grant progress would be through quarterly Board meeting reports.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strong evidence of ongoing engagement of internal stakeholders:

- Cabinet monitors program effectiveness at leadership meetings
- Standing committee for PD and technology
- Surveys and focus groups used to assess effectiveness of programs and initiatives

Technical Review Form Page 11 of 21

Strong evidence of ongoing engagement of external stakeholders:

- School Board meetings annual summary of strategic plan
- · Parents and community members serve on committees
- · Parent notification system
- · Social media

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) 5

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance measures for reading comprehension seem appropriate, ambitious, and achieveable. No rationale was provided for the following measures: body mass index (grade 2), pro-social behavior (grade 8), literacy exam (11th grade), so it was not possible to assess the appropriateness of these measures.

Selection criteria (b) and (c) were not addressed.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Project components that would be evaluated were identified; however, no information was provided about how these evaluations would be carried out. There is no reference to the evaluation of district processes or practices that are integral to the proposed grant activities, such as technology integration, community outreach, service delivery, etc.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Required information provided in Budget Narrative.

The budget is sufficent to support the implementation of the proposed grant activities and reflects a thoughtful rationale for program priorities. Budget allocations established for the 10 individual projects seem reasonable.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant presented a 3-year sustainability budget, including budget assumptions and potential funding sources.

The district estimate to sustain the grant is \$3,000,000 per year. The applicant's premise that the grant program and goals can be sustained through a combination of redirected funds and increased tax revenue due to growing population seems rational, however, since estimates of the re-directed funds and increased revenue were not provided, it was impossible to determine whether the premise is reasonable.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		

Technical Review Form Page 12 of 21

The applicant did not adequately address any of the selection crtieria for the competitive preference priority.

No one organization was identified as the agency with which the district would partner to pursue the competitive preference priority.

The population-level desired results identified were not appropriate--they are not student focused and do not reflect educational results or other education outcomes. Several were actually project activities:

- Produce and distribute a DVD with basic kindergarten readiness skills . . .
- Fund a position of district-wide social worker . . .
- Expand after school care for elementary students . . .

The performance measures presented for the priority are not performance measures (District social worker, Mental health services, Summer meal program, etc.).

Selection criteria (3), (4), and (5) were not addressed in the application.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

There was not ample evidence of core assurance areas and the district's plan to improve teaching and learning through personalized learning was incomplete and not clearly articulated.

٦	Total	210	115



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0233AR-3 for Rogers Public School District #30

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Three of the four Core Educational Assurances are mentioned. College and career standards, data systems, effective teachers and leaders. There is no direct mention of turning around lowest achieving schools. While the proposal may be comprehensive, in the sense that it intends to implement all of its activities across all of its schools, the plan is not coherent. For example, they are purposing one-to-one computing but they have not included a professional development

Technical Review Form Page 13 of 21

up to the task for teaching all the teachers how to teach using one-to-one computers. They have not included adequate tech support for schools to use the new smartboards. The plan seems to do everything at once. There is no indication in this grant that the district sees itself doing anything other than what it is already doing. They have computers, they want lots more, they have professional development with Jane Pollack they want lots more, they have counselors, they want more. More is the theory of action. There is no theory action for what should come first and how that activity might leverage support for the next activity which might create the foundation for success for the next activity.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The expectations of this section were met. The district will include all schools, seemingly equally. In this district all but one school meets the 40% free/reduced lunch count requirement. They calculate across the district 60% of the students meet the "poverty" requirement. Their rationale for including all schools, is that students move from school to school and all the schools should be doing the work stipulated in the grant. While students may move from school to school, and all the schools should be high performing, this equalizing approach may not allow this district to turn around low performing schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal is written to include all school in all the activities, which is,in sense, scaling up. What it does not include is a clear or convincing logic model for implementing all of the activities they are purposing. For example, the statement, "The logic of this proposal is to accelerate student excellence and expand educational opportunities and partnerships" describes an objective not the logic of how or why they will accomplish this. In closing the section, they point to the "passion of teachers and administrators to advance learning for all students ... and the district's intent will be to share future successes..." Passion and intent are good, but insufficient to the task. Their theory of change seems insufficient to the task of "doing much better."

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The data presented on this district does not indicate that there is an African American or Asian American population yet in a following section they indicate that the district is 49% minority. The lack of transparency in the subgroup data is a weakness in this proposal.

Looking at the district presented data, the district's challenge seems to be teaching English language learners. There is no clear focus on this prticular challenge.

They have used the state's projected graduation rate, and it is not ambitious nor do they reflect a hope of closing the achievement gap, in graduation, between white students and all the other sub groups. This same not ambitious expectation seen in the projections for college going. While their enrollment numbers in 2010 were extremely low, the projections continue to reflect an achievement gap. If this district isn't even projecting that they can close the gap, it seems unlikely that they will.

In terms of equity, the rationale for the achievement gap, thus far, seems to be a change in the demographics of the district. It states, "the demographics of the school aged populations continued to challenge the district and the percent of students qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch changed from 41% in 2003 to 60% in 2012. The number of K-12 English language learners went from 2503 in 2003 to 4902 in 2012." This is troubling because school districts are intended to

Technical Review Form Page 14 of 21

adapt to the learners they have. For example, If you have an increase in English language learners, focus on recruiting and hiring more bilingual teachers, not aides, highly effective teachers. This comment seems to reflect that the district is challenged to meet the needs of their students.

The vision identifes the student population as the challenge rather than identifying the professional capacity of their staff as the challenge. This can be read as deficit model thinking and victim blaming identified in education research on school and district improvement as a barrier to further improvement. That said, the vision for the district's work thus far is evident in the increases in academic performance, the narrowing of achievment gaps, increases in gradatuion and college going.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The perspective of this district seems to be that they have made outstanding progress. Starting from remarkably poor performance on graduation and college going they have shown improvement, but the district is not even projecting graduation rates or college going rates that close the achievement gap.

This proposal seems to address all schools the same, when their schools are not all the same. They have one school that does not met the criteria but that school will be involved in the grant as all the others. The plan, so far, does not seem to differentiate between schools.

It states, "progress toward narrowing the gap among students from low-income homes and homes where English was not the first language" points again to blaming the "home" as the problem. The issue could just as easily be described as an insufficient number of bi-lingual teachers to provide equal opportunity for all students to access high quality instruction. If this was the district's perspective, they might have presented teaching work force data.

It states, "These scores indicate a clear record of increasing success in overall achievement and in narrowing the gap among Caucasian students as compared with students who come from families that are economically disadvantaged and/or from families where English is the second language." In the data presented, It is not clear how their Caucasian students are being counted. For example, are their no Caucasian students in their low income group? Might it be that the increase in achievement among their Caucasian students is the increase in achievement among their in their low income group?

Itt states "of note is that the fifth grade literacy scores indicated a 28% increase to 92% Proficient/Advanced for Hispanic students over that four year period with an 11% increase to 94% Proficient/Advanced for Caucasian students. Looking at the appendix on p. 249, it is clear that the increase for Hispanic students still leaves them far behind their Caucasian classmates in most other grades and so far the only explanation for this is their "home." Districts that improve own their lack of competence to meet the learning needs of students who speak a language different than the dominant language of their staff and they show in their plans that they are changing their hiring and recruitment practices to increase the number of highly qualified teachers who speak the languages of their students. They also increase the expectation of bilingualism for all of their students.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: No information was presented about personnel pay.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

Technical Review Form Page 15 of 21

The proposal states, "On January 15, 2010, Ali M. Brady, Arkansas Assistant Attorney General, certified that the state does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the state level to linking data on student achievement or student growth to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation. (Arkansas Race to the Top Grant Application Phase I)" indicating the possibility of looking closely at individual teachers' test score outcomes as one measure of their effectiveness.

It appears that this district has the authority to do what they are proposing. What is less clear is the extent to which they have the support of the school board and the teachers' union. There are structures in place to keep the school board informed of the work but there there no explicit plans for how they expect to cultivate support among board members and the teachers union.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes an interactive, iterative proposal development process that included brainstorming, gathering input from stakeholders, making changes to the proposal based on the in-put, and toward the end of the process, sharing the proposal with school leaders and their teachers where they did gather amore than 70% of teachers' support. This support was gathered through a survey, which is provided in the appendix. Many of the teachers' comments are not addressed by activities listed in the proposal, including restructuring students' and teachers' time to better meet personalized learning needs. No mention of school board support or teacher's union support.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

What this section lacks is a theory of action for why or how these activities are the best way to address the need. Also missing is a clear rationale for how these activities might leverage each other or previous successes. This reads as a wish list of things a district might want to do, rather than a list of how to transform their district from a district that primarily meets the needs of their white learners, into a district that clearly, intentionally and effectively personalizes instruction to provide equal access to high quality instruction for all students.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This plan addresses all students without a specific plan for how they will monitor or adjust for the particular needs of their most struggling students.

(I, ii, iii, iv) There seems to be a cultural approach to supporting college readiness indicated by chants and college readiness standards. There are also measures aligned to college readiness (on-track). What is less clear in the proposal are the instructional assessments and strategies that will personalize instruction for the students who struggle the most to learn in the district. For example, the proposal relies on one-to-one devises to personalize instruction, but there are no clear plans for how the teachers will use these devises to personalize instruction. There are no iauthor writing sessions planned for, or apps identified, or instructional programs designed to support bilingualism for their English learning students. The lack of specificity for instructional personalization gives the impression that this part of the plan has not yet been developed.

Technical Review Form Page 16 of 21

(v) The new high school is proposed to use project based learning, and there is close attention to making sure students in third and eighth grade meet their grade level standards but the plan does not emphasize these types of instructional experiences: Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

Additionally, the parents, like the students, are described as needing to be informed and trained rather than as a informing and contributing to the teachers planning and implementation of personalized learning.

- (b) (I, iii) The sequence of instructional goals is set for the grade level, using state standards which are aligned to college readiness standards but do not seem to reflect personalization.
- (ii) What exactly happens in the classroom is vague. The proposal explains teacher training to use instructional strategies, but it is unclear to what extent these strategies are used to personalize A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;
- (iv) (A) There are meeting structures in place for regular feedback. The on-track measure can help students, teachers and parents see if they are meeting expectations aligned to college readiness.
- (B) It is not clear what or how individual learning will be personalized to meet particular learning needs or interests in real time, as a student is showing needs.
- (v) (C) The proposal highlights Jane Pollock as the key to this work. This seems insufficient to the task, given how hard it is for teachers to use new instructional practices. Additionally Pollock's work is not focused on using one-to-one computers. Teachers will be learning instructional practices that are not hand held devise oriented and than will also have to be learning to teaching with hand held devises which require an entirely different approach for personalization. This seems under conceptualized and unlikely to be implement able.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8
---	----	---

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) (i) As indicated above, while there are some supports in place, overall, this proposal does not provide a convincing plan for an effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;

(ii)

- (iii) The plan does have measures for this, but they are annual summative measures which tend to not help teachers personalize instruction in real time.
- (iv) The district is beginning to put in place a new teacher and principal evaluation system. The main description of the teacher evaluation process focuses on tying student growth to teacher evaluation.
- (b) The plan does not provide enough support for teachers to learn to use the new tools they are hoping to buy.
- (i) The majority of the measures are not actionable. They will not help teachers make real time instructional decisions.
- (ii) It is not clear that the one-to-one devises will be set up with a standards based learning system.
- (iii) IT is not clear that the one-to-one devises will provide students adaptive or immediate feedback on their progress toward standards.

(c)(i, ii)

Technical Review Form Page 17 of 21

On an annual basis, there are supports in place for this. There are supports for this on-going throughout the year, but the data are largely annual summative test scores. There is insufficient training to meet the demanding expectations for teacher and leader learning outlined in this proposal.

(d) Nothing is specifically mentioned about hard to staff schools or math and science teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a) The description of the school board, the district office organization, the school leadership teams, and the annual accountability activities seem up to the task of managing this project.
- b) There seems to be adequate discretion devolved to the school level for school leaders to make local resource allocation decisions, particularly if the school has Title I funds. There do seem to be adequateness leadership structures in place to support the continuation of the work they have been doing, which is basically the aim of this proposal.
- c and d) This proposal does not meet this criteria. The district is depending on one-to-one computers and the hope that they find apps that support student learning. The current approach to student directed personalization seems to be fairly limited to credit recovery using NOVA Net. Nova Net is not aligned to high school standards and does not prepare students to meet college or career ready standards. It's redeeming quality is students can interact with it independently, but those interactions tend to lead nowhere. The descriptions of personalization are descriptions of teachers differentiating instruction through interventions. These are not student directed personalized opportunities they are teacher decisions,
- e) Providing equal access to high quality instruction for English language learners seems to be the central challenge for this district but their proposal does not specify the measures they will use for English language learners or how they will know if they are meeting the needs of these learners in their native language or in English. The same may be said about their students with disabilities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10	points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This district uses "Filemaker Pro" for at least some of its data infrastructure. This is concerning given the many sophisticated school data solutions available. From the data presented the data system seems to display data rather than analyze data. Only basic descriptive statistics are presented. The district also uses the state's data infrastructure both for reporting to the state and for sharing data back to teachers and parents. The appendices provide screen shots and printouts of some of the data displays available to teachers- to see only their own students, and for principals to see the students only in their schools. Having these systems in place does not mean that they are used. There were no informatics presented indicating that they are not collecting information on how many teachers use the data systems or what benefits are gained from the data system beyond providing descriptive statistics which can be provided in any basic excel spreadsheet.

Technical Review Form Page 18 of 21

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is an accountability system in place with regular meetings, and public reporting of test result, but it is basically limited to progress on strategic plans and student achievement tests. What is missing in this proposal is scrutiny of their own practices and systems. For example, there is no mention of course taking mapping to investigate which students are taking and passing which classes and where different course taking maps lead. There is not sign of investigation into their own practices to identify and eliminate the barriers created by instructional and institutional practices. Without this it is hard to improve.

There is a belief that assessment is a driver in this district, reflected in statements like the following," The district embraces the concept that what gets measured, gets done. The district committed to data driven decision making many years ago and in 2005 invested in a new position, a Director of Accountability, to help properly measure progress, interpret data and build the "data" capacity in certified staff. At that point, annual goals articulated in the strategic plan were tied to at least one measurement and regular reports to senior leadership were scheduled. Review of summative progress became an annual event, but formative assessments were also reviewed multiple times throughout the school year as principals presented data to their respective assistant superintendent. Those meetings resulted in student by student discussions and program analysis that identified at risk students and matched them with appropriate interventions. This process will allow for increased personalization of learning sought in the grant." It also states, "Data analysis specialists employed within this grant and the present district technology staff will be responsible for weekly reports of progress to the Deputy Superintendent who will, in turn, share the results at leadership meetings. At the building level, daily feedback monitored by teachers will occur in classrooms with frequent reports to the principals and curriculum specialists.

Professional development of teachers and principals will be evaluated by surveys developed in the district and by objective

measurements of student progress."

These data practices sound like they will form a comprehensive data informing system. What may be missing from the system is appropriate data. Looking at the assessments and measures they have presented it is not clear that these

accountability meetings will have much to report. The lowa test is one summative tests, not aligned to their state standards or test and not tied to their curriculum or daily work in classrooms. These norm referenced tests do not provide teachers, close to the classroom, information about how to personalize instruction tomorrow. This structure of reporting will need robust data including classroom video, common frequent formative assessments to provide teachers the information they

will need to activity personalize instruction.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Thee are regular meetings for continuous reporting within schools and between schools and the district office and the district office and board. Schools also present to the board. The proposal mentions more than once that they know they will have to monitor and adjust as they proceed. That said, for other stakeholders the communication strategies highlighted were unidirectional. Teachers, parents and community members can tell the school board and the district central office what they think, using a variety of forums but there was no description of how the central office responded to those recommendations or concerns. Being listened to is only meaningful if the district is responsive. From the description the district seems to think that listening alone constitutes communication.

(E)(3) Performance measures	(5 points)
-----------------------------	------------

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Technical Review Form Page 19 of 21

The plan includes all of the expectations in the table. The district uses an on-track measure which helps to identify which students are struggling to learn in the district.

There are less than 12 measures. One measure, the lowa test of basic skills is listed multiple times because it is used multiple grades but it is only one measure. This district has insufficient assessments to monitor and adjust instruction in real time. The proposal suggests that the one-to one computing will change that, but does not specify how.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
1 / / · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	-	4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

They plan to monitor improvements in student achievement as their overall measure of success. While this is the obvious outcome they are hoping for, the plan is vague on how they determine if any one activity, for example one-to-one computers, or teacher PD, has an effect on student achievement. Without an intentional approach to data collection for any one of these activities it will be impossible to know what to adjust for improvements. This section does not indicate an understanding of direct and indirect effects or how to measure them.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The proposal identifies funds that will support the project.
- (b) The funds, and the allocation of these funds across the activities, is insufficient to support an effective implementation of the proposed changes.
- (c) (i,ii) There is a description of how the funds will be used, but the outline of the professional development plan does not provide enough support for the ambitious professional development that will be required to learn to teacher with one -to-one devises in ways that help student meet standards in an personalized manner. Even with enthusiatic staff working in teams the plan does not seem to comprehend the challenge of tchanging teacher instructional practices.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) 10 5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is a sustainability plan. On first reading of this proposal, it appeared that the district was using the grant to supplant major investments the district would generally be responsible for making including technology investments, and professional development investments. One reason the plan appeared this way was in the sustainability plan the district is going to simply pick-up the expenses of these activities when the grant is complete. In other words, It is not clear that this proposal leverages these federal dollars to get the district ahead in some way. Rather, the district seems to be requesting these funds to continue their business as usual with more hand held devises and smart boards.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

Available	Score	
-----------	-------	--

Technical Review Form Page 20 of 21

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
---	----	---

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- (1) This plan does include partnership non-profits for after school programs, counseling programs, businesses for internships and higher Education for college counseling.
- (2) There is a table provided that explains the populations, and programs and a table that indicates the results of these efforts as continuous increase in student participation.
- (3) This area is weak because the focus is on inputs rather than outcomes. The one outcome (c, d) to serve a continuously bigger group of students does not specify what the tangible benefits of participation would be or how they would be measured.
- (4) It is notoriously difficult to assess the impact of out of school activity on in school measures of success. The partner provided programs proposed in this plan are unlikely to show in school results.
- (5) (a) unclear.
- (b) the plan uses measures from the school to determine student (family) deficits, rather than responding to parent or community assets.
- (c) No clear plan for this
- (d) The plan is to train Hispanic parents in the ways of the school. There is no mention of the school learning from the parents' assets. There is also no data presented that helps explain how is in the Hispanic population. Making it unclear why these parents are being singled out for training, when it is likely that all parents benefit from understanding what the school expects, and how the school thinks parents can best support their students.
- (e) inputs focused.
- (6) The plan does this.

This plan has the inputs, what it is missing are the outputs and outcomes to determine what, if anything these partnerships are accompishing.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This plan does not meet the expectations of Absolute Priority 1. This is a high standard, and while this district has some success to build on, the plan does not provide a comprehensive professional development plan to address the professional learning needs of their teachers to learn to personalize instructional practices to meet the learning needs of the students who struggle the most to learn in their classrooms and schools. The plan also focused primarily on annual summative measures, and in-puts rather than outputs and outcomes which make it unlikely that this approach will provide teachers and leaders with the information they need to personalize learning in real time. Waiting until the end of the year to find out a student is behind, is an ineffective personalization approach.

This plan seemed to take an equal opportunity approach to improvement- all the schools were going to be involved, all the teachers were going to share in the PD, all the students were going to get one-to-one devises. This grant requires an equitable approach, where resources are distributed unequally to meet unequal needs. Without specific assessment tools,

Technical Review Form Page 21 of 21

staffing resources, professional development and instructional materials aimed at the challenges particular to learning English while also learning content and context, it is unlikley that these students will experience effective personalization.

otal	210	104	
------	-----	-----	--